

REMARKS

Entry of this amendment and reconsideration of this application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Claims 28-36 and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for lacking antecedent basis for certain terms. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 28 does not recite "the two uppermost portions" as alleged.

Claim 29 recites "a circumferential section" and not "the circumferential section" as alleged.

Claim 31 does not recite "the partitions"; it recites, simply, "partitions".

Claims 34 and 40 do not recite "the chamber sections as alleged.

Claim 34 does not recite "the side chambers" anywhere in the claim.

Thus, these rejections should be withdrawn, since they were addressed in the previous amendment.

Claims 22-24, 27, 37-39 and 41 were finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Erbkamm. Claims 25-26, 28-29, 30 and 40 were finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Erbkamm and Schwindt. Applicants respectfully traverse each of these rejections.

An English translation of is attached.

The presently claimed invention relates to a web coating apparatus with a vacuum chamber and a coating cylinder. According to paragraph [0004] of the published application, one problem addressed is that the dividing walls between sub-chambers must not touch the web.

With reference is made to the Figs. 1 and 2, Erbkamm does not disclose guide rollers and a coating roller being attached by supporting elements and bearings to the top of the coating chamber. Erbkamm is directed to a vacuum web coating system having a process roller mill 14

including cooling rolls 15 and 16, see paragraph [0024]. The process roller mill 14 is positioned at second and third fastening points 19 and 20 located at fastening walls 9 and 10, respectively (paragraph [0024] and [0025]). According to Fig. 1, the fastening points 19 and 20 are plates which are horizontally mounted at the fastening walls 9 and 10. The fastening walls 9 and 10 are dividing walls of the process chamber 1 and the reel chambers 2 and 3, respectively. As is visible from the position and the orientation of the cooling rollers 15, 16 in Figs. 1 and 2, cover 22 mentioned in the office action is not a top cover of the chamber 1, but a side cover. There is no disclosure in Erbkamm of the fixation of the guide rollers.

Consequently, according to Erbkamm, the weight of the process roller mill 14 rests on the dividing walls 9 and 10. Moreover, the dividing walls have at their upper ends pass-through gaps for the web. Hence, contrary to the Examiner's assertion, the top of the process chamber 1 is not involved as a support of the process roller mill. Furthermore, the structural integrity of the dividing walls 9 and 10 and of the pass-through gaps can be affected by the weight of the process roller mill, and, consequently, dividing walls 9 and 10 could touch the web, in contrast to the above-mentioned object solved by the presently claimed invention.

Moreover, amended claim 22 includes the feature "... wherein ends of the at least one guide roller and of the coating roller that face toward the removable closing plate are attached by supporting elements and bearings directly to the top,...". Thus, according to the presently claimed subject matter, the weights of the guide roller and coating roller are carried via supporting elements and bearings directly by the top of the vacuum chamber. In contrast, according to Erbkamm, the process mill is supported via plates, which are the fastening points, by the dividing walls of the process chamber. Further, the dividing walls have at their upper ends pass-through gaps for the web. Hence, according to Erbkamm, the forces exerted by the process

mill are directed downward to the bottom of the process chamber, such that the top of the process chamber is not involved. As a result, according to Erbkamm, the dividing walls of the process chamber directly carry the load of the process mill, but not the top of the process chamber.

Consequently, Erbkamm does not teach or suggest each and every feature of claim 22 or of the claims dependent thereon. Moreover, the process chamber and the fixation of the process mill according to Erbkamm are based on a construction principle totally different from the construction of the strip coating chamber of amended claim 22. Therefore, the subject matter claimed is not obvious to a person of skill in the art in view of Erbkamm. As a result, the subject matter of amended claim 22 and the claims dependent thereon are patentable over Erbkamm, alone or in combination with the cited secondary reference.

Schwindt does nothing to overcome the deficiencies of Erbkamm.

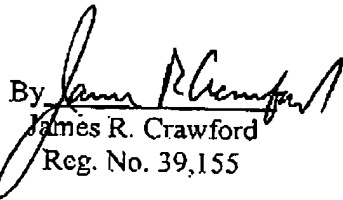
In view of the foregoing, all claims are believed to be allowable.

Allowance is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the fees filed, asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account No. 50-0624, under Order No. NY-HANZ-206-US.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure